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The Megiddo Message

Devoted to the Cause of Christ

Jesus and Paul—Two Men,
but One Doctrine

RACE SEGREGATION

PARTNERSHIP

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

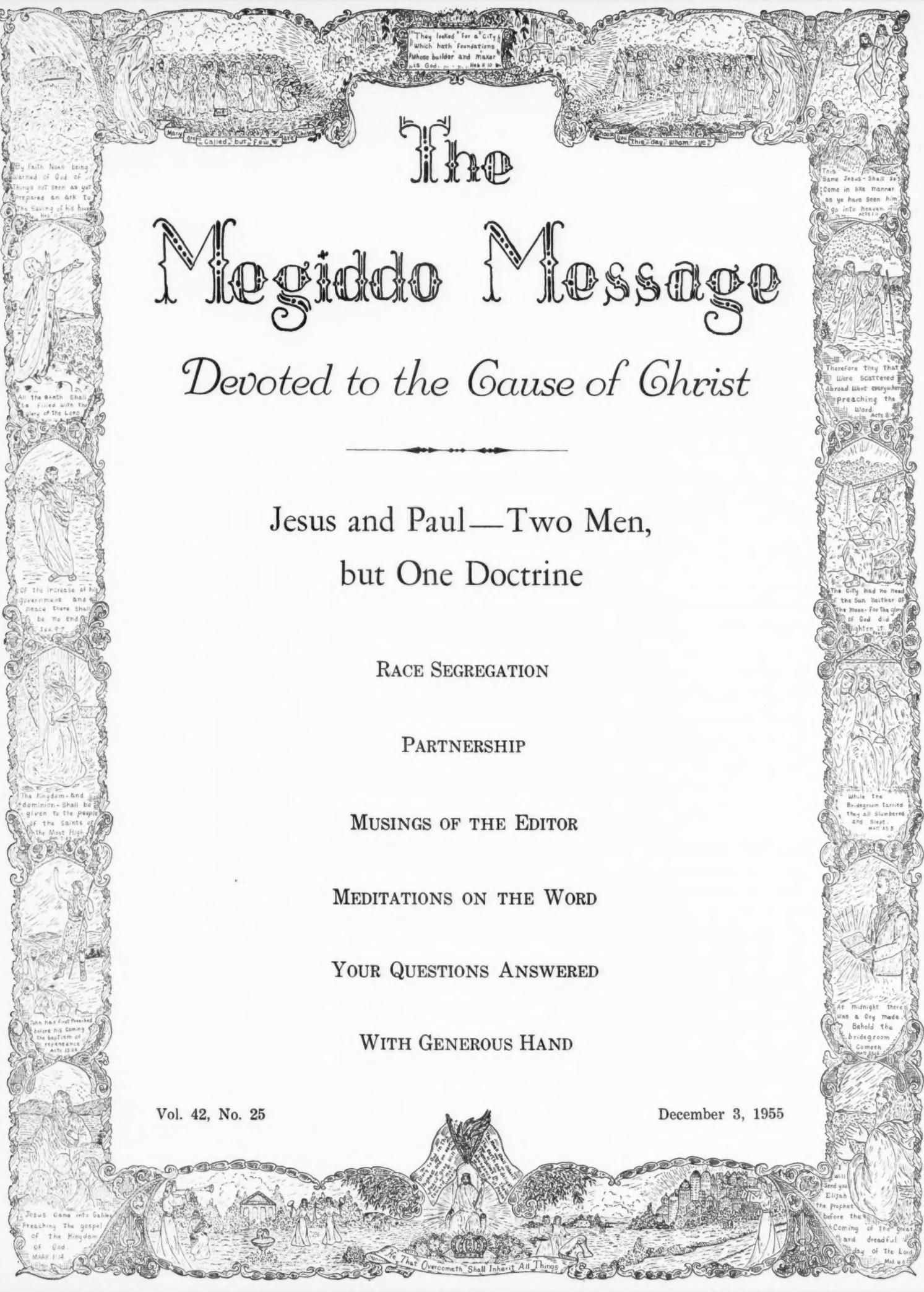
MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

WITH GENEROUS HAND

Vol. 42, No. 25

December 3, 1955



The Megiddo Message

December 3, 1955

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Letters

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Dear Friend:

I felt after reading your wonderful Christian magazine, that it was about the only magazine from which both parents and teen-age boys could read and derive a spiritual benefit.

I am proud to have the MESSAGE in our home for my teen-age son and his friends to read.

Mrs. H. J.

Sylvania, Ohio

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Dear Friends:

I take THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE and hope never to be without it again. Words cannot express how much I love the MESSAGE and all you dear people.

El Dorado, Ark.

Mrs. J. H. C.

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Dear Editor:

How fortunate the day when I saw the little ad in the paper, "The Coming of Jesus and Elijah." I enjoy my MESSAGE and the Megiddo Bible Lessons, and refer back to them many times.

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

C. J. W.

The MESSAGE—A Vital Mine

Dear Friends:

This is to express my feeling of gratitude to an Almighty God that He has called me to understanding through the means of the Megiddo Mission. How great has been the help which I have received from the noble man, the founder of your wonderful church.

I believe the MESSAGE is a vital mine, a source of wisdom, courage, hope, consolation, and in the end, life everlasting in glory to all who are willing to profit by it. Its message from the Bible is admirable in every subject set forth.

St. Charles, Ont.

C. T.

Signs, Literal and Spiritual

Dear Friends:

This morning it was below freezing and that is a sign we must be getting ready for winter. Most people take notice of such signs and are preparing for what is coming.

But what about the signs spoken of in the Word of God? How many are taking notice of these, and preparing themselves for the oncoming storm. We know that there are only a few, but the question with each of us must be, Will I be one of the few? In the natural, we plant trees around our homes to protect them against strong winds. So must we protect ourselves from that coming storm. If we are surrounded by good thoughts, words and deeds, we shall be protected.

Morrisville, N. Y.

F. G.

Jesus and Paul—Two Men, but One Doctrine

IN THE FIRST ARTICLE of this series we showed that the doctrine of the atonement had its origin in pagan religions, and was ultimately absorbed by Christendom. This infiltration of the doctrine of the atonement into popular thought displaced the ancient and pure doctrine of the at-one-ment. In fact, the meaning of the word was changed from its original significance which demanded individual effort in order to become at one with God, to the strange and mystical conception that a substitute could secure divine favor for us. This doctrine was received eagerly; offering, as it did, an easier passage to salvation, a shorter, smoother route than God's spokesmen prescribed. The doctrine presupposes two theories, the fall of man and the redemptive work of Christ, neither of which has any foundation in the Word. The Word teaches that every man is condemned for his own sin and justified by his own righteousness.

The second article showed Christ's means of salvation to be by a lifelong death to sin, and that our only hope of salvation lies in following in His footsteps—dying to sin as He died.

Critics accuse the Sacred writers of being in disagreement concerning the means of salvation. They recognize the fact that Jesus Himself never said anything which could indicate that the forgiveness of sin and the reconciliation between God and man were the consequence of His death on Calvary. He never said that His death was to be regarded as a sacrificial atonement. But they say that Paul was convinced that Jesus had died to atone sacrificially for men's wickedness, and developed the idea with enthusiasm; in other words, that Jesus taught there was a work to do, but Paul taught that the work was done.

This is a serious charge. If the Sacred writers were in disagreement, then God is the author of confusion and the Book is unreliable as a guide to salvation.

God forbid this!

It is our eternal joy to know and to proclaim to mankind that the Book is not arrayed against itself; that the Word of God is not "yea and nay" but "yea, . . . and Amen" (II Cor. 1: 17—20) that one Supreme Mind governs the utterances of all the inspired writers, who combine to reveal one way of salvation.

We shall examine the evidence from Jesus and Paul on the matter of salvation, to show the utter injustice of the critics' accusation.

Concerning WORKS

Jesus' first sermon introduced the principal theme of His ministry, that good works are necessary to salvation. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16). Our good works are to be constantly apparent.

This same sermon concludes with a matchless illustration, showing that a simple assent to right doctrine will not suffice. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which

built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7: 24—27). Hearing and doing is the one and only assurance of safety in the great and final storm of God's judgments.

Christ's last message repeats the same truth, that salvation is dependent upon good works. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22: 12).

Paul's teaching concerning works is identical with this: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works." "Be careful to maintain good works." "Be rich in good works" (Phil. 2: 12; Tit. 2: 7; 3: 8; I Tim. 6: 18).

When confronted with such evidence, the critics fly to Eph. 2: 8, 9 for support. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." On the very face of it, we can be sure that Paul is not speaking of *good* works which he so often recommends and commands, lest his own writings become flatly contradictory. Furthermore, good works cannot be implied in this text, because the producing of genuine good works never occasions boasting in the least degree, but rather the most profound humility.

Let us examine this passage phrase by phrase to learn, if we may, the author's true meaning.

"By grace are ye saved." People think they know how to define grace; but do they? God's definition is not man's. Titus 2: 11, 12 leaves no room for doubt: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation . . . teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Does that sound like "unmerited favor"? Could "grace" be more inseparably coupled with good works? This grace brings salvation, and we are told in Romans 1: 16 and I Cor. 15: 1, 2, that salvation comes by obedience to the "gospel," which, then, is equivalent to grace.

"Through faith." But certainly not by a dead or barren faith. "Faith *without* works is dead" (James 2: 17, 20, 26). Therefore the only faith which God recognizes is that faith which is coupled with works.

"And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." We can all agree that our best, most perfect effort during "three score years and ten" could never earn eternal salvation. When we have given our utmost to God, His return to us remains a gift, far exceeding in value what our best efforts could merit.

"Not of works, lest any man should boast." As we have said, this cannot indicate good works, for, among the inspired writers, there is no stronger advocate of good works than the Apostle Paul. The Bible speaks of various kinds of works, some good and some bad. Gala-

tians 5 lists the fruits of the Spirit, and also the works of the flesh, with the warning, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." This is the type of works to which Paul refers in Eph. 2:9, the works of the flesh which cannot bring salvation.

Equally emphatic was Paul in his denunciation of the works of the Mosaic Law. Such works were highly popular in that day. In fact, the meticulous observance of the letter of the law (without its spirit) gave the Jews the feeling of superiority and created much of their boasting, which was so detestable in the sight of God. The Mosaic Law had become a dead letter, expiring by limitation, and the works of a defunct law could never bring salvation, no matter how zealously or sincerely performed. Neither Levitical righteousness, nor self-righteousness could save—"lest any man should boast."

Without exception, those who fly to Eph. 2:8, 9 for support stop short of the conclusion of the passage (v. 10), and for good reason: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This testimony speaks for itself. Paul has the argument, leaving his critics speechless.

The Jews of Paul's day were so obstinate in their refusal to relinquish the old law that often he had to repeat his warning as to its worthlessness. The same language of Ephesians 2 occurs in Romans 4, and the same qualifying terms must be employed. "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God" (v. 2). Neither the works of the flesh, nor the works of the Law of Moses could justify Abraham in the sight of God. Abraham was justified by good works, the works demanded in the Law of Faith (James 2:21-24).

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). The man whose faith is counted for righteousness, is he who ceases from the works of the flesh and from the works of the Mosaic Law and observes the Law of Faith which demands righteousness.

Concerning THE CROSS

Jesus and Paul are agreed on good works, and they are equally agreed in reference to the cross.

The cross has been used as a religious symbol since the dawn of civilization. Crosses of various designs, some dating from the Stone Age, have been found in nearly every part of Europe, as well as Egypt, India, Syria, and Persia. And today the symbol and principal content of the professed Christian religion and of Christian civilization is found in this one word—the Cross. Hence a literal cross is displayed on many church spires.

But, strange as it may seem, the early Christians, those who were the closest to Christ, never employed the cross of Calvary as a symbol of their faith, nor is the picture of His passion to be found among their records which have survived those early days.

Furthermore, "the cross" which found its place in the messages of Jesus and Paul was not the cross of Calvary, nor did it bear any similarity to, or connection with, the literal cross. In fact, Jesus' references to the cross were uttered before His literal crucifixion was contemplated.

He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). And again, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:36-38). The cross of Jesus' gospel symbolized the self-denial which is the daily portion of all who undertake to follow in His footsteps. The salvation which Jesus offered was not dependent upon Calvary.

Likewise the gospel of salvation which Paul proclaimed. He said, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness: . . . We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1:18, 23). If the cross which Paul advocated is "foolishness" unto the Gentiles, then certainly the cross of his gospel is an entirely different cross from the one which is venerated and adored by all so-called Christendom today. The cross of Calvary is the key word of nominal Christianity, but the true cross of Christ is *foolishness* unto the Gentiles. Here is argument invulnerable. The religious world may sing,

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time,"

or,

"I must needs go home by the way of the cross,"

but they have missed the way home, for they have never caught a glimpse of the cross of Christ which would lead them there.

The cross which Paul proclaimed was the cross which he bore. He said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

So we see that the cross of Christ was the cross of Paul, bringing daily *self-denial* or *crucifixion*.

Do you really want to become a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus? Then take up your cross daily and follow.

Concerning BLOOD

We must examine the writings of these two great men concerning the blood, for that is a word around which the doctrine of the atonement persistently revolves.

Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). Lest any should form the false conclusion that this refers to Jesus' literal flesh and blood, He added, "As . . . I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (v. 57). No one would think for a moment that Jesus ate of His Father's physical substance, but would readily understand that Christ's robust spiritual life was the result of eating the wisdom of the Father. Our spiritual vitality is gained in like manner, not by eating the literal flesh and blood of Christ, but by eating His words.

Lest any should still attempt to rely upon the literal blood of Christ, He gives still further pre-eminence to the spiritual, in verse 63. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." There was entirely no

value in His literal flesh and blood; He said emphatically, "The flesh profiteth nothing." His *word*, the truth which He proclaimed, was the medium of salvation, and not the literal flesh and blood.

Christ's last message to mankind enforces this same principle. John was permitted a glimpse into the future where he saw the redeemed, and learned how they gained their place among the glorified throng. "These are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). Either all these terms are literal, or they are all symbolic. It would be impossible to wash a literal robe in spiritual blood; and it would be equally as ridiculous to reason that a robe of character could be washed in literal blood. First, let us test the possibility of the whole passage as literal. Literal robes can certainly be washed in literal blood; *but they will not come out "white,"* as the text stipulates. Therefore, there is no other alternative than to accept all the terms as symbolic. Robes of character washed in the *word* of the Lamb will become white, pure; which is simply to repeat Jesus' plain language of John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the *word* which I have spoken unto you."

From these two passages, John 6:53, 57, 63 and Rev. 7:14 it is obvious that *blood* is often used in metonymy for *Word*.

The same usage occurs in Paul's Epistles.

Let us read Romans 3:23—25. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

The first statement is accepted as factual, without controversy: "All have sinned."

Now, what is the means of justification? We are "justified freely by his grace." However, we have no right to interpret this grace as "God's unmerited favor" when Paul himself has given it an opposite definition. "Grace," as stated before, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11, 12).

If this grace or righteousness abounds in our lives, then "God hath set forth [Christ] to be propitiation through faith in his blood." A footnote in the *Emphatic Diaglott* says, "the word *hilasteerion* never signifies 'propitiation,' as it is translated in the common version." It is better rendered "reconciliation" by Goodspeed. We are reconciled to God through a living, working faith in the blood or Word, and by this means we obtain the forgiveness of sins.

The language in Romans 5 is similar. We read, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (v. 8). It is folly to form the conclusion that Christ died for us on Calvary when Paul says elsewhere that "Christ died for us *according to the Scriptures*" (I Cor. 15:3). It does not say that He died for our sins according to the theological concept, but "according to the Scriptures." There is a vast difference. One absolves us from responsibility; the other binds us to it. According to theology, Christ suffered in our stead. According to the Scriptures, Christ "suffered for us, leaving us an example, *that ye should follow his steps*"

(I Pet. 2:21). If we follow His steps, die to sin as He died (Rom. 6:10, 11), then we are "justified by his blood [Word]" and "we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9).

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (v. 10). This text is thoroughly defined in the following chapters, where Paul says, "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (6:5). In other words, if we share Christ's death to sin, we shall also share His resurrection to life immortal.

"Not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:11). Here it must be remembered that the Greek word, *katallage*, which is translated "atonement," has for its definitions: "A change from enmity to friendship, reconciliation . . . reconciliation of sinners with God." The one and only means of friendship with God is as Jesus taught, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14), and Paul never proclaimed any other gospel.

Concerning FORGIVENESS OF SINS

If ever, during His earthly ministry, Jesus alluded to the value of Calvary, it would have been after His death and resurrection, but then, as before, we find no mention of it. In His final commission to the Apostles He told them to preach "repentance and remission of sins" (Luke 24:47). How could men repent of sins if they did not exist, sins from which they had been completely absolved by Jesus' crucifixion? And further, why need there be any remission or forgiveness of sins if Jesus paid the penalty? A debt is cancelled by one of two means, either paying the penalty or forgiveness. If a judge pardons or forgives a criminal, he is released, and there is no penalty to be paid. Jesus incorporated the forgiveness of sins in His gospel. How can theologians add the paying of penalty? It is superfluous, unnecessary, if sins are forgiven.

Jesus' later commission to Paul was identical with that which He gave to the Eleven, as Paul himself reveals in his audience before Agrippa. Quoting Christ, he said, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:16—18). Nor was Paul disobedient to the heavenly vision, "but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (v. 20). How striking his language! Repentance meant more than simple remorse; it meant reformation, a turning to God, and doing works meet for repentance. Then would follow God's abundant forgiveness of sins. Paul did not teach a different doctrine than

(Continued on page 7)

RACE SEGREGATION

"... with liberty and justice for all."

AS A YOUNG AMERICAN you have given your pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America many times. Again and again you have repeated its closing phrase: "with liberty and justice for all." Then, as you have grown and taken your place as men and women in society, perhaps, to a certain extent, you have forgotten that noble sentiment.

America as a nation was founded with the noblest ideals. When the early colonies sought freedom from the oppression of the British crown, the Declaration of Independence was written. No finer document was ever composed and adopted by an earthly government. Its stirring words have proved to be the marching song of free men. Contained within is the following ennobling expression: "We hold . . . that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." No reasonable, honest person can quarrel with such a principle.

Through the years America has prospered beyond the fondest dreams of its founders. But even from the beginning there was one blot—slavery—which cast a dark shadow on its fair land. All men were not God-fearing, nor were all honorable. The liberty and freedom they claimed for themselves was denied to their servants. The lucrative income from forced slave labor was too appealing to grant the Negro his freedom and set him on the level of his masters. But thanks to men of higher principle, this system was abolished, but not without a bitter war.

Since the Civil War the wound of bitterness has not been healed entirely. In the Southern States especially, segregation of schools, churches, transportation systems, etc., developed. A great many of the "whites" consider themselves just too superior to allow the colored the same privileges. Hence, the bitterness continues and we still see the shameful posters, "white only"; "colored only."

The Supreme Court's decision in 1954 declaring segregation of races as unlawful and unconstitutional, has not been welcomed in the South. Some states are accepting it grudgingly, while others intend to keep the schools segregated and are preparing for years of argument in the courts.

We admire the step taken by the U. S. Government to remove this evil, but firmer action may be needed.

Consider further: The United States enters war. The cry, "To arms!" is sounded through the land. Draft laws are enforced. From all walks of life, from all racial backgrounds, men rally to the colors. Side by side the Negro fights with his white fellows; side by side they suffer and fall and sacrifice their lives for the ideals of their nation. Together the weary survivors return to these shores in triumph, only to find again the line of demarcation. "With liberty and justice for all"! Have we forgotten? Is this justice? Is this the way we would like to be treated?

"God is no respecter of persons."

America boasts that it is a Christian nation. The churches are numerous, and the South is in no way backward in this respect. We claim to worship one God, but is God pleased with our worship when we despise our brothers? We pray to God and address Him as "Our Father." What do we mean by this? What should we mean?

The men to whom Jesus gave His model prayer were from all of the provinces of ancient Palestine—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee; they were from all social classes—the rich, the middle class business men and the very poor; they were of all intellectual classes—the wise and the ignorant; in fact, when He gave them this prayer, He gave it through them to the entire world, to all who would call upon God in spirit and in truth. The first two words, "Our Father," suggested to those who heard Him, as they do to us, that God is the Father of all mankind, of all races, all classes, all nationalities. So when we pray and use the words, "Our Father," we should feel a oneness with all believers who call upon Him.

If we are going to be God-like and Christ-like, we must learn to treat and respect our colored friends in the same manner we would desire were the situation reversed.

Let us consult the sacred writers and hear their views on the subject.

The Apostle Paul expressed it thus: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28). Paul set aside racial heritage and social status. In Christ all racial and cultural groups become one. The slave might continue to serve his master but in a new relationship—he was no longer slave but "a beloved brother" and equal in Christ (Philemon, verse 16, R.S.V.). To the men of Athens he spoke in these words: "God that made the world and all things therein, . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth" (Acts 17: 24—26). Centuries before science discovered the fact that all men are of one blood, the holy men of old understood it and taught this principle.

The Apostle Peter likewise spoke wisely on this matter, but not before he had learned his lesson on the housetop in Joppa. He said: "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10: 28). He learned, as many of us need to learn, that all men or women, whether black or white, Jews or Gentiles, native or foreign born, were equally precious in God's sight if they feared and obeyed Him. It was in this connection that he spoke those memorable words: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10: 34, 35). Peter made it as clear as words could express it that God shows no favoritism; recognizes no superior races, no special or chosen people; gives priority to no nation.

Unscrupulous individuals through the ages have always despised the poor and unfortunate, but God's Prophets always denounced this. Listen to the Prophet Malachi

(2: 10), "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?"

The Patriarch Job saw the justice of God in His dealings with men and he declared: "If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me: what shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him: and did not one fashion us?" (Job 31: 13—15).

God had chosen Israel for His special people, but at all times whenever any of the surrounding nations would serve Him they were accepted. For her piety Ruth the Moabitess was welcomed into the family of Israel; Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath and blessed her household; Naaman the Syrian was healed of his leprosy by Elisha. Israel continually made proselytes of other nations and races. There is no partiality with God.

And what of Jesus?

Throughout His ministry His love was indiscriminating. He healed the slave of a Roman centurion even though he belonged to a hated occupation army. He healed ten men of leprosy and later commended the gratefulness of a lone Samaritan. He did not hesitate to preach to a Samaritan woman, for He realized that they too were human and needed His gospel. Do we wonder that Paul wrote later that Jesus, in calling both Jews and Gentiles, had "broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2: 14, R. S. V.).

The incident of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch is an outstanding example that God respects only character and not race or color. The angel commanded Philip to preach to this man. The eunuch was seeking understanding, he was willing to be guided, he accepted Philip's message and was baptized. Is a better example of humility and submission ever disclosed in a white man? Who can deny that when that eunuch returned home he was influential in winning many of his countrymen to God?

The grand company who are numbered with the saints and stand with Jesus in that coming day are "redeemed . . . out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5: 9). They are not all of one race, or one color, or one language. Because they are Jews gives them no priority, nor because they are white, or English-speaking, or American. Character alone stands with God.

An obvious inconsistency is that of foreign missions. American churches spend millions to evangelize and improve the living standards of the heathen in Africa and elsewhere, but the Negro at home is despised. We want to make brothers of the Negro in Africa, we want him to be in the fellowship of the saints, but at home there is segregation, there is hostility, and bitterness. For this reason it is not strange that the discouraged folk are asking: "Is there any race apart from the American Negro that is exempt from salvation." Let us ask ourselves, Are we



"Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God . . . out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

consistent? We do not deny the value of mission work in foreign lands, but let us show the right Christian example at home.

We refer again to our Pledge to the Flag. A change in the wording authorized by Act of Congress, signed by President Eisenhower June 14, 1954, permitted the insertion of the words *under God* following *nation*. The clause now reads: "one nation under God, indivisible . . ." When President Eisenhower signed the act that added *under God* to the Pledge, he remarked that "in this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resources in peace and war."

Happy and wise is the nation that puts its trust in God. But, lest we forget, while professing to be Christians and claiming God's providence, let us not practice that which is an abomination in His sight. God is against race discrimination, our Government is against it. Let us learn this elementary lesson in Christian behavior. Let us strip ourselves of all malice, and be charitable to all, that the favor of the Eternal may continue on this fair land.

PARTNERSHIP

TO HAVE A PARTNER in any enterprise of life suggests the pleasant thought of having a co-worker to facilitate the means to some specific goal. Legally, the term "partnership" means the association of two or more persons who have agreed to combine their labor, skill, and property for the purpose of engaging in lawful business, sharing profits and losses between them. A partnership can be formed only by contract, and the most important provision is that which sets out the manner in which profits are to be distributed among the partners.

To the servant of God, it is a constant source of wonderment that the Almighty Father of Heaven and earth has condescended to work together with His children. He looks down to behold the affairs of earth, and has written the contract by which we may enter into partnership with Him. It states that if we are willing to co-operate with Him as our Senior Partner, we can work side by side, God in one end of the yoke and we in the other. The partnership will be terminated only by our refusal to co-operate, for if we will not work with Him, He will withdraw from the yoke. He will fulfill His part of the contract, and if we fulfill our part we can enjoy a partnership that will know no conflicts, and shall thrive and prosper through an Eternity.

If we throw our labor and skill into the King's business, our partnership will never experience bankruptcy or losses, but all will be profits. Our share of the profits will be determined by the extent of our willingness to work together harmoniously with our Partner. In every detail we must align our will with His. We must make His superior judgment our judgment, His decisions our decisions; then in the end the success will be a joint success.

Unlike many business partners, God will not withhold a single plan from us. He lays it all before us openly and has said that if we labor faithfully with Him we shall be heirs and co-heirs of His vast estate.

We cannot consult our Partner only in matters that appeal to us, or when it seems convenient. Our fellowship must be without interruption. Our communion must know no intermissions. Our thoughts must become so fused and blended with His thoughts that they are one. Our will must be completely merged with His will. When one gains, through experience, the knowledge that God is with him, guiding and directing him, he becomes aware of an inward strength and power that nothing in the world can defeat. It is intimacy of this sort with the Father that makes us fearless and our hearts believing. Storms of adversity may howl, and friends may oppose, but through it all we can know His encouragement by our side:

"Fear not, I am with Thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand."

In the grip of some bitter conflict with our old nature, we discover that we must stand on our own two feet and pull up in the yoke as we never have before. We have come to what seems to be our own Gethsemane, and we realize that all hope depends on the effort we put forth.

Bracing ourselves, we strive with all our might to lift the heavy burden, when we suddenly find that it is lighter; lighter than we expected. What can it be? Blessed thought, it is none other than our faithful Partner in the other end of the yoke, lifting and lightening our load! Oh, do we prize the opportunity of enjoying such a noble affiliation? By Him, our efforts will never go unrecognized, and He never fails to stand ready to help. With His superior wisdom, He knows more about working out our life's problems than we know, and He will, if we interfere less, trust Him more and give Him a free hand.

Good partners must know each other well. God knows each of us. He knows our downittings and our uprisings, and there is not a word in our mouth that He does not know altogether. Paul, the Apostle, said his great desire was to *know* Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, that he might be made conformable unto His death. When one acquires this knowledge, he can truly say that he knows God; and this takes in much. If His Word works mightily in us, we can know that we are workers together with Him and our partnership is operating on a safe and sound basis. True fellowship springs from a complete understanding and unity. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." But if we walk in the light, we can know that we have fellowship with the Father, and fellowship with one another. This fellowship will illuminate one's life with faith, glorify it with goodness, and enrich it with service. Not a service that seeks the honor of men, which is shallow and shoddy, but the kind that enlarges life for having given freely and lovingly, even though it may be known by no one other than the unseen Comrade by our side.

When reading the account of our Master's great struggle in the Garden we are able to know in a measure the depth and warmth of His close communion with the Father. With this, He was equal to His trial in the hands of a grim, cold world. Thus it will be with every true follower. Surely, when the faithful are exulting together in the great Jubilee to come, they will all attribute their victory to having walked very close to their Divine Partner all the way.

Modern history gives us the account of one very successful business partnership—that of Abraham Lincoln, and his law partner, Herndon. When called to the office of the presidency, Lincoln said to him, "Leave our sign up, Herndon, and when I return we will carry on." But all mortal partnerships come to an end. He never returned. Contrary to this, death cannot destroy our partnership with God. If truly successful, it will be resumed again at His appointed time. Then our understanding will grow deeper, the association closer, and the enjoyment richer as the centuries roll on.

Sin is to be overcome, not so much by direct opposition to it as by cultivating the opposite principles. Would you kill the weeds in your garden? Plant it with good seed; if the ground be well occupied there will be less need of the hoe.

Musings of the Editor

WHAT anticipation grips the mind as we consider the words of a familiar hymn:

"The bells so clearly ringing now
Proclaim His coming near."

What bells? The bells of prophecy ring loud and clear, denoting the nearness of the High Priest's arrival.

The message of this hymn is derived from the history of the high priest in the days of the Levitical priesthood of old. Clothed in his priestly vesture, he entered alone into the

The Ringing of the Bells

most holy place once a year to make an offering (at-one-ment) and to return with a blessing for the waiting people.

Significantly placed on the hem of the high priest's robe, were bells, which, ringing as he walked, announced his entering and coming out of the most holy place.

Christ, our great High Priest, has gone into the Most Holy Place, even Heaven itself, to receive for the waiting people the grandest of all blessings, even life forevermore. "The bells so clearly ringing now, proclaim His coming near." What bells? The prophetic bells of pleasure-loving equal to Noachic times, moral degradation equal to Sodom, wickedness and impiety surpassing all time before. The alarm bells of fear and perplexity, distress of nations and perilous times, of troublous, criminal times when men should "do evil with both hands earnestly."

But the ringing denotes the High Priest's coming! And He brings a blessing for the waiting people, even to everyone who has "clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord*, and righteousness from the God of his salvation!"

As in the type, they who wearied of waiting for the priest's return and went home, missed the blessing he brought with him, so in the antitype: They who grow weary in well doing and say "my Lord delayeth his coming," and return from occupying till He comes, shall miss the reward. There is virtue to waiting "and not be tired by waiting," for "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time" and bring salvation.

OBITUARIES

The King of Terrors strikes very often to the face where he can be viewed in his approach, and very often to the back, striking, as it were, like an unexpected bolt from the blue. In these guises has been his two most recent visits to our Rochester congregation, and that within the twenty-four hour period between Saturday night, November 12, and Sunday morning, November 13.

PHILIP BREMER

Our brother, Philip Lewis Bremer, was born in Lyons, N. Y., Nov. 17, 1880. On Nov. 29, 1905 he was united in marriage to Christina C. Schoenthaler. He leaves to mourn his loss, his wife, two sons, Harvey and Leland Bremer of Churchville, N. Y., and a brother, David Bremer, of Auburn, New York.

This brother became interested in the work of our

Mission forty years ago, while living in Lyons, New York, where he was engaged in farming. In the year 1916 he united with the church and later moved with his family to Rochester to be nearer our place of worship. For many years he has been a sufferer of pain, but now his toiling and suffering are past. How blessed that promise of the life to come where there shall be no pain to struggle with and endure; no burdens to lay upon the sufferer which the frame cannot sustain; no work under which heart and strength fail; no long hours of fever and restlessness; no overtaxed brain and nerve in that Homeland God has furnished for them that love Him.

MARGARET BERG

With a pleasant smile, our sister, Margaret Berg, entered the church on Sunday morning to take her usual place in the sanctuary. Before the service was concluded, she arose to seek some help and relief from inward pain, and, in a matter of minutes, succumbed to a heart attack.

The deceased was born in Rochester, N. Y., October 18, 1888, the daughter of Anslem and Frances Blum Ritz. On November 30, 1916, she was united in marriage to John J. Berg, and in the year 1924 she became a member of our church. She leaves to mourn her loss, her husband, three sons, John and George Berg of Churchville, N. Y., and William Berg of Phoenix, Arizona; a sister, Mrs. Mary Dueppel of Sea Breeze, N. Y.; a brother, Joseph Ritz, of Rochester, one granddaughter and several nieces and nephews.

Each one of the funeral services was conducted by our pastor, Rev. P. J. Thatcher, at the Funeral Home of J. Boyd Winchell and Son—for Brother Bremer on Nov. 15, and for Sister Berg on Nov. 16, with interment for each in Mount Hope Cemetery.

"God's way is the best way, though I may not see
Why sorrows and trials have gathered 'round me;
He ever is seeking my gold to refine,
So humbly I trust Him, my Saviour divine."

JESUS AND PAUL

(Continued from page 3)

Jesus taught, but he preached even more fully the forgiveness of sins by good works.

We have examined the doctrines of Jesus and Paul from four angles, and have found that both taught good works to be necessary to salvation. Jesus taught that we must bear the cross of daily self-denial and Paul preached that same cross, a cross which is "foolishness" to the Gentiles. Jesus taught that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood in the same manner that He ate of the Father—not the literal flesh which "profiteth nothing," but the Word; and Paul borrows this same language, assuring us that the blood or Word of Christ gives eternal life. Jesus and Paul further agree that forgiveness of sins and not paying of penalty follows true repentance.

Not a shade of disagreement exists between the Great Teacher and his ablest Apostle, not a hair's breath of variance in the way of salvation which they proclaim. If we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we shall deny ourselves and take up our cross daily. If we follow the example of Paul, we shall be crucified with Christ; indeed we shall yield to his advice which in his words urges, "Copy me, as I copy Christ."

Meditations On the Word

"Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few" (Second Kings 4:3).

The circumstances of this miracle are probably less familiar than some others. Elisha the Prophet was approached by the widow of one of the sons of the prophets, who was in financial distress. Creditors were pressing her, she was destitute, and in keeping with the barbarous custom of the times, her two sons were about to be seized as slaves to satisfy the debt. In this crisis, to whom could she turn but to the great Prophet who, although a poor man, had access to the power of the Eternal Himself.

As in every recorded instance of miraculous increase, there had to be something to start with. What were her assets? Only a pot of oil, worth a few coppers. It is enough. Go and borrow vessels and pour it out until they are all full, then sell the oil to pay your debt and provide for your own future living. In faith she did as commanded, and the oil did not stay until the last jar was full.

A charming story, to be sure, with a happy ending, but it also contains a profound study in God's relations and dealings with men. It is not often that mortals are granted such access to the treasures of infinity as was this nameless widow of long ago. We do not know her net profit on the transaction, but of one thing she could be forever certain: if she came short it was her own fault. The Prophet had set no limit; she had set it herself—the limit of her faith. The command had been to "borrow not a few," to expect largely, to make no small plans. A hundred or a thousand more vessels could have been filled just as easily.

In an age of unprecedented prosperity and material security, the temptation is to trust in material things, and let God take care of the "odd items"—if He will. Israel was warned against the perils of prosperity, the tendency to say, Mine own hand hath gotten me this wealth (Deut. 8:10—17). Few enough are the superior souls with the insight and the humility to say with the poet-king, "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

The Almighty does not force His blessings upon anyone. Certain things, of course, are the common property of the human race; but the spiritual blessings, the "over and above" which really matters, must be asked for. "Ask, and ye shall receive," is the Master's promise; and the Apostle James adds an important qualification, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (1:6). As in the case of the widow, it is our faith, or lack of faith, that sets the limit.

Smallness is never an attribute of the nature or the works of God. Whatever He does is forever and on the scale of infinity (Eccl. 3:14). We, as sons of God, are invited to share His eternal riches, not stingily, but largely. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10).

Through the Prophets runs the thread of the largeness of all the Eternal's dealings. "Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things" (Joel 2:21). Not only in His created universe, but "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad" (Ps. 126:3). "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits" (68:19). Of those willing to "taste and see that the Lord is good," it is promised that "they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them to drink of the river of thy pleasures" (36:8).

The Apostles, too, were conscious that they were dealing with infinite resources and infinite generosity, nor were they afraid of superlatives in the description. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). There is nothing small or cramped about the Christian religion; it calls for a tremendous expansion of mind and soul to even faintly apprehend these promises.

Perhaps no gift is so precious or so needful as forgiveness for our sins, which beyond question have been abundant. Yet at this point of greatest need the Eternal's abundance stands waiting to be claimed. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." What more could we ask of "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6)?

With such abundance at our disposal, to ask or expect in a small way is to confess our own smallness and to question the Giver's greatness. To be sure, we are small by nature—zero minus—but we can grow. His abundance can make us great. We will grow just as we partake of the fullness of God, just as our faith grows. If we expect nothing, we shall receive nothing. If, in a careless, disinterested response, we ask for little, if we borrow but a few vessels, we need not be surprised if we are unable to clear our debts at the Judgment. It is well in all things to aim high, for it is one of life's certainties that we shall never hit higher than we aim. If we sow sparingly, we shall reap also sparingly. It will be scant comfort, when the oil has ceased to flow, to look back and think of the riches which might have been ours had our faith not been so small.

"Ask great things, and God will surely hear,
If His mercy ye will claim.
More than conquerors shall His soldiers be;
Ask then, ask in His own name."

This is by no means a matter of saying, "Give, give!" Far from it! Millions the world over are doing that, getting no answer, because they ignore the rules. For rules there are. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14). Not our own will, but His. There is always a difference, until our will is lost in His. His will is that we depart from all evil, that we cleanse our vessels if we expect to receive the precious oil of His blessings.

The Prophet Job predicates a most essential preliminary to our asking: "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him; if iniquity be in
(Continued on next page)

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL

PERSONAL

CURRENT



Do you have a question? Personal replies will be sent to Biblical questions to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

I have learned through your MEGIDDO MESSAGE that December 25 is not truly Christmas, but simply a celebration of pagan origin. Must I and my family actually break with this tradition to be true Christians?

We would suggest that you first do all in your power to show your relatives and friends the reasons why Jesus' birth should not be commemorated on December 25. Show them that there is no Bible evidence to support this date, but much Bible evidence to prove that He was born in the spring, on Abib 1st. Explain to them from Ex. 12: 2 and 13: 4 that Abib is the beginning of the Bible year, that the definition of the word proves it to have had its beginning at the first new moon after the vernal equinox. Show them from Deut. 16: 1; I Sam. 20: 5, 6 and Psalm 81: 3, 4, that the New Moon Feast of Abib was observed by the people of God by divine decree; and that Mary and Joseph were attending this same spring feast when Christ was born.

Remind them of their Ancient History from school days, which shows the ignoble background of December 25, how that it was the occasion of the Roman Saturnalia and the Winter Solstice which revealed Rome at its vilest and lowest level. Mention that some of the customs of those festivals have survived the ages and been incorporated into the observance of Christmas.

Another convincing proof that Christ could not have been born in the winter is that the Bible narrative which describes Christ's birth pictures shepherds in the fields, keeping watch o'er their sheep. No such sight occurs in Palestine in December, for it is the cold, wet, rainy season, when the flocks are sheltered in the folds.

The weight of evidence is strong and conclusive. It has convinced many people that Christ was not born in December, but, reluctant to break with tradition, they ask, "What difference does the date make, so long as the Christmas spirit is in our hearts?"

The difference is just this: The difference between right and wrong, between truth and error. There is no way of avoiding or reconstructing such Bible commands as, "Come out from the world"; "have a genuine break with evil"; "thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." If friends refuse to meet these Bible demands, then we must stand alone, and "Observe the month Abib."

Will those people who do not know the way of salvation, or do not care to walk in it after they know it, be given another chance?

No. The Bible is very specific that now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6: 2). Furthermore, our Lord declared: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7: 17). God will see to it that those who would serve Him if they knew the way of salvation, shall receive the necessary instructions. But all who spurn His warnings shall not be given another chance when this present life is over.

What is the real cause of our many sins and temptations?

The Apostle James answers this question. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth

sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1: 14, 15). We sin by allowing our unlawful desires to lead us into by and forbidden paths. Only when we learn to discern between the right and the wrong and make a definite stand against sin, shall we be free from it.

How can I increase my faith?

Paul said: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). A daily reading of God's Word, and especially those portions of Scripture which speak of faith, is certain to have a good effect. Think faith, talk faith, act faith! Refrain from all discussions which tend to cause doubt. Consider carefully God's fulfilled promises of the past, and the fulfilling promises of the present, and certainly you shall find faith to trust the fulfillment of God's Word in the future.

Can a man be saved by crying to God at the last moment of his life?

The Bible makes no such promise. The true Biblical sentiment is expressed by Isaiah: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" (Isa. 55: 6, 7). And according to Jeremiah there is no hope of turning to God when one is at the point of death. He says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13: 23, see also verses 15, 16). Jesus' closing words are terse and poignant: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22: 11). If we want eternal salvation, the time to serve God is when we have life, health and strength.

NOTICE

Subscribers who wish to present the Christmas evidence to their friends at this season can secure help by sending for copies of tracts which give reasons why true Christmas comes in the spring.

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

(Continued from page 8)

thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles" (11: 13, 14). The benefits which a loving Father is waiting and eager to bestow can never be grasped by unclean hands, or hands so filled with temporal interests and treasures that the spiritual becomes secondary or incidental. But those who have in all sincerity and with all their being run the race according to the rules laid down, and who have asked "in faith, nothing wavering," know by experience that the promise is certain, and are assured that if they cast not away their confidence (Heb. 10: 35), the eternal future holds for them more than eye has seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man has conceived, of glory and bliss (I Cor. 2: 9).

"Be no more content with a meager share
From your Father's abundant store.
Ask Him largely now, He will hear your prayer,
And give till you want no more."

WITH GENEROUS HAND

Do you think your burden heavy?
Other fainting souls are near.
Tell them of the Truth that strengthens,
Pass along a word of cheer.
'Tis the surest way to lighten
Your own burdens day by day;
Shed a beam of hope to brighten
Some discouraged brother's way.

All about us in the darkness
There are those who walk alone.
There are others, sad, disheartened,
By misfortune overthrown.
And your song of hope will cheer them
Like a beacon in the night.
Just to know a friend is near them
May to them be life and light.

'Tis the way to hope and courage
For the battles we must fight;
Thus we brighten our own pathway
When we give another light.
As we speak to cheer another
Soon *our* hearts are all aglow,
And the gladness of our brother
Comes to us in overflow.

Of the precious oil of heaven,
Though you have a scant supply
Share it, for to you 'twas given,
And your cruse will not run dry.
Give it not just for the asking,
Seek some one who is in need
Of the joy in which you're basking.
You can do no better deed.

Tell the good news of the Kingdom
To the weary, worn and sad;
Tell them of our blessed Saviour—
Make their countenances glad.
Tell what we must do to merit
God's salvation in that day
When He gives the Holy Spirit
To all who will now obey.

Truth will lift the heavy burden
Of a weary, sin-sick soul,
When that soul has made it welcome
And relinquishes control.
So if you have Truth to offer
Give it with a generous hand,
That another may be guided
To fair Canaan's peaceful strand.

—L. L. S.